

March of Dimes Foundation

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October 4, 2017

The Honorable Greg Walden
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Walden and Ranking Member Pallone,

On behalf of the March of Dimes, a unique collaboration of scientists, clinicians, parents, members of the business community, and other volunteers representing every state, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, I appreciate this opportunity to share our views on the Helping Ensure Access for Little ones, Toddlers, and Hopeful Youth by Keeping Insurance Delivery Stable (HEALTHY KIDS) Act of 2017.

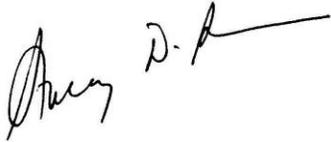
The March of Dimes commends the Committee on Energy and Commerce for your efforts to extend the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Created in 1997, CHIP is an outstanding example of the policy success that can come from bipartisan cooperation. CHIP enables states to provide quality, affordable coverage for approximately 9 million children across our nation. As a result of efforts under CHIP, Medicaid and other programs, more than 95 percent of all children in the U.S. currently have some form of health insurance coverage. In addition, 19 states also cover pregnant women under CHIP, removing barriers to pregnancy coverage and prenatal care for about 370,000 women each year. These states provide critical coverage to pregnant women who otherwise would likely have no source of insurance and great difficulty accessing care.

The March of Dimes strongly supports provisions in the HEALTHY KIDS Act that would extend CHIP for five years, as well as continuing Express Lane Eligibility and important programs related to childhood obesity and pediatric quality measures. We are deeply concerned, however, by the decision to include third party liability provisions that remove important protections for women receiving prenatal care and children receiving preventive services. These provisions, which have been in place for decades, seek to ensure that pregnant women's and children's access to care is not impeded by disagreements among insurance companies about payment. We urge you in the strongest terms to reinstate these protections as the bill moves forward. In addition, the March of Dimes opposes the decision to fund important public health priorities, such as community health centers and the National Health Service Corps, with monies from the Prevention and Public Health Fund (PPHF), a choice that simply transfers funding from one important health program to another. The siphoning of funds from the PPHF will have serious

implications for both the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's budget and the valuable programs it supports, many of which seek to improve maternal and child health.

The March of Dimes is deeply troubled that Congress failed to extend CHIP funding before its expiration on September 30. We urge you to quickly pass a bipartisan, five-year reauthorization of CHIP to enable this vital program to continue providing high-quality coverage at a reasonable cost to millions of children and pregnant women.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stacey D. Stewart", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Stacey D. Stewart
President